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*Funding social change since 1967*

# RESIST

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*A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority*

January 2001

## Analyzing the Al-Aqsa Intifada

NOAM CHOMSKY

After three weeks of virtual war in the Israeli occupied territories, Prime Minister Ehud Barak announced in late October a new plan to determine the final status of the region. During these weeks, over 100 Palestinians were killed, including 30 children, often by "excessive use of lethal force in circumstances in which neither the lives of the security forces nor others were in imminent danger, resulting in unlawful killings," Amnesty International concluded in a detailed report that was scarcely mentioned in the US. The ratio of Palestinian to Israeli dead was then about 15-1, reflecting the resources of force available.

Barak's plan was not given in detail, but the outlines are familiar: they conform to the "final status map" presented by the US-Israel as the basis for the Camp David negotiations that collapsed in July. This plan, extending US-Israeli rejectionist proposals of earlier years, called for cantonization of the territories that Israel had conquered in 1967, with mechanisms to ensure that usable land and resources (primarily water) remain largely in Israeli hands while the population is administered by a corrupt and brutal Palestinian Authority (PA), playing the role traditionally assigned to indigenous collaborators under the several varieties of imperial rule: the Black leadership of South Africa's Bantustans, to mention only the most obvious analogue.

In the West Bank, a northern canton is



Palestinian youths shout over the Temple Mount wall. Photo by Nir Kafri, Impact Visuals

to include Nablus and other Palestinian cities, a central canton is based in Ramallah, and a southern canton in Bethlehem; Jericho is to remain isolated. Palestinians would be effectively cut off from Jerusalem, the center of Palestinian life. Similar arrangements are likely in Gaza, with Israel keeping the southern coastal region and a small settlement at Netzarim (the site of many of the recent atrocities), which is hardly more than an excuse for a large military presence and roads splitting the Strip below Gaza City.

These proposals formalize the vast settlement and construction programs that Israel has been conducting, thanks to munificent

US aid, with increasing energy since the US was able to implement its version of the "peace process" after the Gulf War.

### Tension and Violence Mount

The goal of the negotiations was to secure official PA adherence to this project. Two months after they collapsed, the current phase of violence began. Tensions, always high, were raised when the Barak government authorized a visit by Ariel Sharon with 1000 police to the Muslim religious sites (Al-Aqsa) on Thursday, September 28. Sharon is the very symbol of Israeli state terror and aggression, with a

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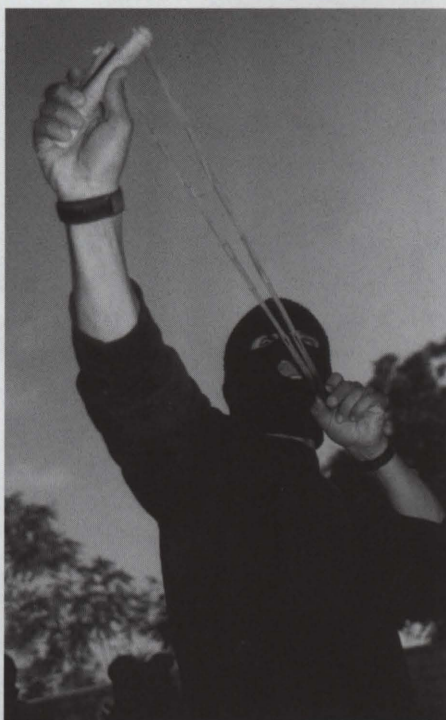
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rich record of atrocities going back to 1953.

Sharon's announced purpose was to demonstrate "Jewish sovereignty" over the Al-Aqsa compound, but as the veteran correspondent Graham Usher points out, the "Al-Aqsa intifada," as Palestinians call it, was not initiated by Sharon's visit; rather, by the massive and intimidating police and military presence that Barak introduced the following day, the day of prayers. Predictably, that led to clashes as thousands of people streamed out of the mosque, leaving seven Palestinians dead and 200 wounded. Whatever Barak's purpose, there could hardly have been a more efficient way to set the stage for the shocking atrocities of the following weeks.

The same can be said about the failed negotiations, which focused on Jerusalem, a condition observed strictly by US commentary. Possibly Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling was exaggerating when he wrote that a solution to this problem "could have been reached in five minutes," but he is right to say that "by any diplomatic logic [it] should have been the easiest issue to solve (*Ha'aretz*, October 4, 2000). It is understandable that Clinton-Barak should want to suppress what they are doing in the occupied territories, which is far more important. Why did Arafat agree? Perhaps because he recognizes that the leadership of the Arab states regard the Palestinians as a nuisance, and have little problem with the Bantustan-style settlement, but cannot overlook administration of the religious sites, fearing the reaction of their own populations. Nothing could be better calculated to set off a confrontation with religious overtones, the most ominous kind, as centuries of experience reveal.

The primary innovation of Barak's new plan is that the US-Israeli demands are to be imposed by direct force instead of coercive diplomacy, and in a harsher form. The outlines are in basic accord with policies established informally in 1968 (the Allon Plan), and variants that have been proposed since by both political groupings (the Sharon Plan, the Labor government plans, and others). It is important to recall that the policies have not only been proposed, but implemented, with the support of the US. That support has been decisive since 1971, when Washington abandoned the basic diplomatic framework that it had initiated (UN Security Council Resolution



Young palestinian uses a slingshot next to the Temple Mount gate. Photo by Nir Kafri, Impact Visuals

242), then pursued its unilateral rejection of Palestinian rights in the years that followed, culminating in the "Oslo process." Since all of this has been effectively vetoed from history in the US, it takes a little work to discover the essential facts. They are not controversial, only evaded.

## Rejectionist Plans, Closure and Power

As noted, Barak's plan is a particularly harsh version of familiar US-Israeli rejectionism. It calls for terminating electricity, water, telecommunications, and other services that are doled out in meager rations to the Palestinian population, who are now under virtual siege. It should be recalled that independent development was ruthlessly barred by the military regime from 1967, leaving the people in destitution and dependency, which has worsened considerably during the US-run "Oslo process."

One reason is the "closures" regularly instituted, must brutally by the more dovish Labor-based governments. As discussed by another outstanding journalist, Amira Hass, this policy was initiated by the Rabin government "years before Hamas had planned suicide attacks, [and] has been perfected over the years, especially since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority."

An efficient mechanism of strangulation and control, closure has been accompanied

by the importation of an essential commodity to replace the cheap and exploited Palestinian labor on which much of the economy relies: hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants from around the world, many of them victims of the "neoliberal reforms" of the recent years of "globalization." Surviving in misery and without rights, they are regularly described as a virtual slave labor force in the Israeli press. The current Barak proposal is to extend this program, reducing still further the prospects even for mere survival for the Palestinians.

A major barrier to the program is the opposition of the Israeli business community, which relies on a captive Palestinian market for some \$2.5 billion in annual exports, and has "forged links with Palestinian security officials" and Arafat's "economic adviser, enabling them to carve out monopolies with official PA consent" (*Financial Times*, October 22; also *New York Times*, same day). They have also hoped to set up industrial zones in the territories, transferring pollution and exploiting a cheap labor force in maquiladora-style installations owned by Israeli enterprises and

*continued on page three*



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*continued from page two*

the Palestinian elite, who are enriching themselves in the time-honored fashion.

Barak's new proposals appear to be more of a warning than a plan, though they are a natural extension of what has come before. Insofar as they are implemented, they would extend the project of "invisible transfer" that has been underway for many years, and that makes more sense than outright "ethnic cleansing" (as we call the process when carried out by official enemies).

### Settlements and Isolation

Current plans, whether imposed by coercive diplomacy or outright force, have similar goals as were articulated by Israeli government Arabists in 1948: that the refugees "would be crushed" and "die" or join the impoverished classes in Arab countries. They are not unrealistic if they can rely on the world-dominant power and its intellectual classes.

The current situation is described accurately by Amira Hass, in Israel's most prestigious daily (*Ha'aretz*, October 18, 2000). Seven years after the Declaration of Principles in September 1993—which foretold this outcome for anyone who chose to see:

*Israel has security and administrative control of most of the West Bank and 20% of the Gaza Strip. It has been able "to double the number of settlers in 10 years, to enlarge the settlements, to continue its discriminatory policy of cutting back water quotas for three million Palestinians, to prevent Palestinian development in most of the area of the West Bank, and to seal an entire nation into restricted areas, imprisoned in a network of bypass roads meant for Jews only. During these days of strict internal restriction of movement in the West Bank, one can see how carefully each road was planned: So that 200,000 Jews have freedom of movement, about three million Palestinians are locked into their Bantustans until they submit to Israeli demands. The bloodbath that has been going on for three weeks is the natural outcome of seven years of lying and deception, just as the first Intifada was the natural outcome of direct Israeli occupation.*

The settlement and construction programs continue, with US support. On August 18, *Ha'aretz* noted that two governments—Rabin and Barak—had declared

## The innovation of Barak's new plan is that the US-Israeli demands are to be imposed by direct force instead of diplomacy.

that settlement was "frozen," in accord with the dovish image preferred in the US and by much of the Israeli left. They made use of the "freezing" to intensify settlement, including economic inducements for the secular population, automatic grants for ultra-religious settlers, and other devices, which can be carried out with little protest while "the lesser of two evils" happens to be making the decisions, a pattern hardly unfamiliar elsewhere. "There is freezing and there is reality," the report observes caustically. The reality is that settlement in the occupied territories has grown over four times as fast as in Israeli population centers, continuing — perhaps accelerating — under Barak. Settlement brings with it large infrastructure projects designed to integrate much of the region within Israel, while leaving Palestinians isolated, apart from "Palestinian roads" that are travelled at one's peril.

### US Media Keeps Us in the Dark

Another journalist with an outstanding record, Danny Rubinstein, points out that readers of the Israeli press are largely shielded from the unwelcome facts, though not entirely so. In the US, it is far more important for the population to be kept in ignorance, for obvious reasons: the economic and military programs rely crucially on US support, which is domestically unpopular and would be far more so if its purposes were known.

To illustrate, on October 3, after a week of bitter fighting and killing, the defense correspondent of *Ha'aretz* reported "the largest purchase of military helicopters by the Israeli Air Force in a decade," an agreement with the US to provide Israel with 35 Blackhawk military helicopters and spare parts at a cost of \$525 million, along with jet fuel, following the purchase shortly before of patrol aircraft and Apache attack helicopters. These are "the newest and most advanced multi-mission attack helicopters in the US inventory," the Jerusalem Post adds. It would be unfair to say that those providing the gifts cannot discover the fact. In a database search, David Peterson found that they were reported in the Ra-

leigh (North Carolina) press.

The sale of military helicopters was condemned by Amnesty International (Oct. 19), because these "US-supplied helicopters have been used to violate the human rights of Palestinians and Arab Israelis during the recent conflict in the region." Surely that was anticipated, barring advanced cretinism.

Israel has been condemned internationally (the US abstaining) for "excessive use of force," in a "disproportionate reaction" to Palestinian violence. That includes even rare condemnations by the International Committee of the Red Cross, specifically, for attacks on at least 18 Red Cross ambulances (*New York Times*, October 4, 2000). Israel's response is that it is being unfairly singled out for criticism. The response is entirely accurate. Israel is employing official US doctrine, known here as "the Powell doctrine," though it is of far more ancient vintage, tracing back centuries: Use massive force in response to any perceived threat. Official Israeli doctrine allows "the full use of weapons against anyone who endangers lives and especially at anyone who shoots at our forces or at Israelis" (Israeli military legal adviser Daniel Reisner, *Financial Times*, October 6). Full use of force by a modern army includes tanks, helicopter gunships, sharpshooters aiming at civilians (often children), etc. US weapons sales "do not carry a stipulation that the weapons can't be used against civilians," a Pentagon official said; he "acknowledged however that anti-tank missiles and attack helicopters are not traditionally considered tools for crowd control"—except by those powerful enough to get away with it, under the protective wings of the reigning superpower. "We cannot second-guess an Israeli commander who calls in a Cobra (helicopter) gunship because his troops are under attack," another US official said (*Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, October 3). Accordingly, such killing machines must be provided in an unceasing flow.

It is not surprising that a US client state should adopt standard US military doctrine, which has left a toll too awesome to record,

*continued on page nine*



# Olives, Stones and Bullets

## *Reflections on a Peace Activist's Visit to Hares*

URIAVNERY

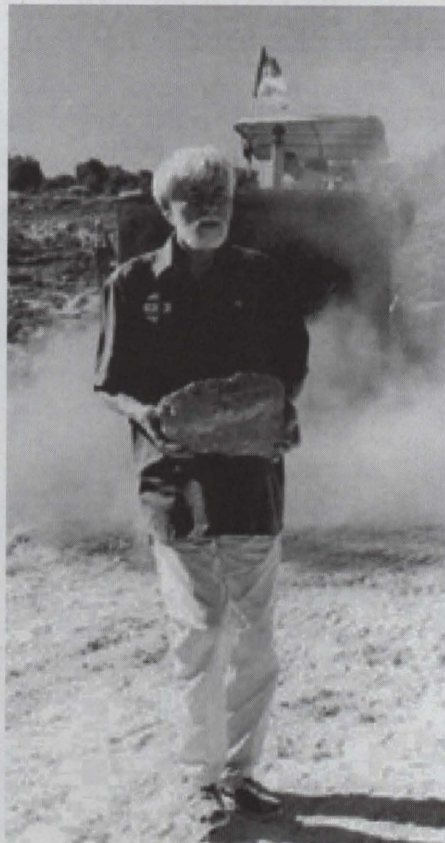
Suddenly I noticed that we were quite alone on the road. A wonderful road, six lanes wide, parts of it still in the building stage. Completely empty.

This is a bypass-bypass road, an invention of the occupation. First, they built the cross-Samaria road, from Kafr-Kassem to Ariel and beyond, so as to by-pass the Palestinian villages. But the Palestinian village of Bidia, which, on Saturdays, has become a shopping mall for Israelis, slowly crept up to the road. In anticipation of the next intifada, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak (each in his turn) decided on an even more sterile, bypass-the-bypass road. Again great stretches of Palestinian land were expropriated, again we demonstrated together with the Palestinian villagers (November 1998), again Gush Shalom activists were tear-gassed (one does not shoot at Israelis), again to no avail.

But now the road is empty. Only from time to time we meet groups of cars. The settlers are driving in convoys for fear of stone-throwing children. But we were lucky. Here and there we saw stones lying around on the road, remnants of previous stone-showers, but we passed unmolested.

On the previous evening we received a SOS call from the villagers of Hares to please come there. This Palestinian village, near the big Ariel settlement, is cut off from the world. The army is blockading it, no one is allowed to enter or leave. The olives, the only product of the village, are going to rot on the trees, especially in the orchard bordering the Revava settlement. Anyone trying to harvest there is in mortal danger. A 14-year old boy was shot and killed there only three days ago, when he was alone in the orchard with his father. The villagers hope that the presence of Israelis will restrain the settlers and soldiers, allowing them to harvest the olives on which their livelihood depends.

A woman from the village also called. She cried excitedly that at that moment the soldiers had opened fire on the village and on her. She begged us to come the next morning. Until darkness, she promised, there is generally no shooting.



Uri Avnery in the Occupied Territories.  
*Photo courtesy of Gush Shalom*

Hares is situated on a hill, 100 meters away from the road, at a stretch where the bypass-bypass joins the bypass road. The stretch is an ideal place for throwing stones, and therefore the settlers are angry. We know the landscape well, because in March, 1999 we helped a family in the next village, Kiffel-Hares, to build a house demolished by the army.

### **Crossing the Lines**

It was not easy for us to decide what to do. It was clear that this is a war zone. In order to get to the place, we had to risk being stoned or shot at by Palestinians, who would think that we are settlers. On the other hand, our presence would be like a red rag to the settlers. The army would consider us breakers of the occupation laws. All this in order to pick olives a few dozen yards from a settlement.

Gush Shalom activists who can come on a workday include youngsters in their teens and elderly people. Men and women.

Was it responsible to advise them to enter a war-zone?

On the other hand, in these difficult days, in the middle of the Palestinian war of liberation, it is very important that the threads still connecting Israelis and Palestinians are not broken, as extremists on both sides would wish. It is also important to show the Palestinians that there are peace forces in Israel who want to display solidarity during their hardest hour.

These arguments won. It was decided to mobilize by phone the activists who were ready to leave their work on a working day and to take part in the action. Within two hours, 20 volunteered. And so, on Friday, we were on our way from Tel-Aviv in a minibus driven by an Arab-Israeli. From Jerusalem, another contingent, led by the "Rabbis for Human Rights" group, were also on their way.

We arrived at Hares without mishap. On the way we did not encounter any army checkpoints. Even the checkpoint which was located for years on the green Line, near Kafr Kassem, had mysteriously disappeared.

We entered the village by foot, climbing the hill, crossing a field of desolation – old olive trees cut down, ancient terraces destroyed, apparently to enable the army to shoot without hindrance.

From the direction of the mosque we heard the Friday prayers as we crossed the quiet village by foot and left it by the western entrance, on the way to the plantations. There the army stopped us with armored jeeps and heavily armed soldiers. A tough major (or perhaps lieutenant-colonel, the bullet-proof vest made it difficult to be sure) quickly filled out a prepared form, signed in advance by the C/O Central Command for all occasions, declaring the Hares plantations a "closed military area." We were requested to leave.

We refused, of course. We pointed out that the settlers, who were shouting slogans and cursing us, were allowed to pass freely in their cars. Then a superior officer, a lieutenant-colonel or perhaps colonel (as above) appeared. We were told that he was the brigade commander.

We argued with him. He was a sympathetic, intelligent officer, with a sense of humor, one of those who are called "regular fellows," which made what he said sound even more objectionable. Why the

*continued on page five*



*continued from page four*

discrimination between the settlers and the Palestinian villagers? Well, it's because the villagers throw stones. Why punish a whole village for the deeds of a minority? "I am not sure it's a minority." It was quite clear that his heart is with the settlers, whose life, as he said, "had become hell." For him, the Palestinians were enemies, no sentiments attached.

Why does he not permit us to harvest olives? "Because you came here to provoke the settlers." We answered honestly that we had no such intention.

While this argument went on, our activists started to infiltrate into the plantations one by one. The brigade commander had to choose between several alternatives: he could call for reinforcements to get us out by force, or he could allow us to harvest olives. Wisely, he chose the latter course.

### Picking Olives and Dodging Stones

The next six hours were an experience taken straight out of an old Zionist propaganda film. We picked olives, one by one, from the trees nearest the settlement. We used our hats as containers, until buckets were brought. We climbed trees in order to get at the higher branches. Hard work, but really enjoyable. On the hill, opposite us, at a distance of some fifty meters, a cluster of angry, bearded, scull-cap-wearing settlers had gathered, but soldiers prevented them from approaching us.

When the villagers saw us working, families of the tree-owners dared to come and harvest too. Friendships developed quickly. Everything was done at a hectic speed. The Palestinians knew that they could work there only as long as we were there. They chose work methods that were damaging to the trees, hitting the branches, gathering the olives on nylon sheets spread on the ground, in order to gather as many olives as possible in a few hours.

At 3 p.m., when we were about to finish, we received a call on the mobile phone. We were asked to come as quickly as possible to the other side of the village, where a confrontation was developing with the army. The villagers wanted to use the presence of Israelis (those who had come from Jerusalem) in order to remove the roadblock put up by the army to prevent them having contact with the neighboring village and the world at large. The Palestinians calculated that the army would not open fire in the

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presence of Israelis and foreign TV crews.

Since the situation was deteriorating rapidly, we were asked to come and try to prevent a fatal clash.

We boarded the minibus and drove into the village. Along the main street, a lot of children were standing around. At some distance, children were playing (training?) throwing stones at each other. Some local youngsters volunteered to walk in front of our bus and tell the children that we were not settlers. Proceeding this way we were nearing the place of the clash when we were stopped by the village head and a very authoritative young man. The head said that the confrontation had ended and that he would show us the place. The young man said that the confrontation was still going on and that we should not go on any further. It was clear that he was the boss. He strongly suggested that we go by the way we had come. But first he gave as a short, passionate speech, in which he called Ehud Barak some highly uncomplimentary names from the animal kingdom.

The village head volunteered to show us the way, so that we could view the site of the clash from the army side, from the main road. But as we were leaving the village, we encountered an army jeep. A sergeant with Russian features stopped us with a movement of his hand generally reserved for Arabs. One of us asked him to be polite. He became very angry and told us that we could not leave the village. A blockade was in force; no one comes in, no one goes out. He doesn't give a damn whether we are Israelis or not. Orders are orders.

Only with great difficulty did we convince him to call his superior, who told him, of course, to let us pass. We reached the main road (the cross-Samaria) and had to drive behind a convoy of settlers, when suddenly we were hit by a shower of stones. At some distance we saw a group of small children. Fortunately, only the

body of our bus was hit. At lightning speed police and army jeeps appeared on the scene and took up firing positions opposite the village. But the children had already disappeared.

In the meantime, we were told over the phone that the confrontation was really over, so we decided to make for home. On the way, the village head (a renovation contractor active in the Tel-Aviv area) alighted. We waited for a few minutes, to make sure that he got home safely. He started to climb the hill, but before he had gone no further than a few meters, soldiers ran after him, rifles ready to shoot. We got down from the bus and convinced the soldiers that the man was not a dangerous terrorist, but a villager who had been kind enough to show us the way. They let him return to his village. But in the meantime, police had stopped near our bus and made out a traffic-violation ticket, because it was standing on a part of the road where it was not allowed to stand. A stubborn young police woman refused to yield, but we finally convinced the Druze policeman at the wheel to relent. After all, the bus had been standing there only because we were talking with the soldiers.

Over the phone we heard that two activists from the Jerusalem group had been arrested during the clash at the roadblock. (Neither of the two belonged to Peace Now, as was erroneously reported on the Israeli Channel 1. Peace Now had taken no part in the events of the day.)

This is how the reality of the occupation, November 2000, looks.

We returned home tired but content, as they say. The time was 4 p.m., the hour shooting usually starts.

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*Uri Avnery founded Gush Shalom and participates in Peace Action in Israel. This article is reprinted from [www.gush-shalom.org](http://www.gush-shalom.org).*



# The Tragedy Deepens

EDWARD SAID

No one really knows whether the Al-Aqsa Intifada temporarily subsided because Yasser Arafat expressed his public disapproval of it on 17 November or whether the short-lived lull was generated out of fatigue or a search for new positions. Despite the enormous cost in lives and property to Palestinians, however, the essential problems remain, and the Israelis continue their blind and finally stupid assault on Palestinians with the strangulation, economic blockade, and bombings of cities and towns continuing without respite.

Every Arab leader who welcomed Barak's election a year and a half ago should now be asked to repeat his declarations so that their hollowness can be demonstrated again and again. I find official Arab attitudes virtually incomprehensible, having spent most of my life trying to decipher them according to the laws of reason and elementary common sense. Did they seriously believe that Barak was the saviour of the peace process, and if so weren't they aware that to save the peace process was nothing less than to prolong the Palestinian agony? Did they think that he was any different from the great "war hero" who has devoted his entire career to killing Arabs, and if he wasn't why did it take them so long to find out? Does subservience to the United States require so much subservience, so many acrobatics, such a complicated twisting and turning and so profound a prostration? How long and for what do they cling to a repressive, basically rejectionist status quo with neither the will nor the capacity to wage war nor to live in peace, simply to please a distant and arrogant superpower that has showed them and their people so much contempt, inhumanity and utter, unspeakable cruelty?

Can they not do anything more substantial than what they are doing when Israel is using helicopter gunships to kill Palestinian civilians and destroy their homes, while

the United States supplies Israel with the largest ever order of attack helicopters during the past 10 years and Israel has added \$500 million to its budget for settlements? Not one word of official protest against US policy that has brought such catastrophe to our people. It is this timorousness that allows US policy-makers, of whom the unregretted Dennis Ross — the mediocre individual who has done more single-handedly to advance Israel's interest than anyone — is but one, to say that the Arabs trust the US and its policies and remain

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**Only a mass movement employing tactics and strategy that maximize the popular element has ever made any difference on the occupier and/or oppressor. . . .**

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close friends and allies of the US. Surely the time has come to speak frankly of a hypocrisy and brutality without parallel, instead of standing silently by cap in hand as more and more Palestinians are killed with arms paid for by US taxpayers.

## Leadership Void

But the core of the tragedy is what is happening to the victims themselves, the Palestinian people. Here one must speak and think rationally, not letting emotion and the passions of the moment sway the mind too much. My general impression is that Palestinians everywhere feel the absence of real leadership, a voice or an authority that can speak both of the present and the future with some sense of vision, some articulation of a coherent, inclusive goal beyond the usual platitudes. No one has any doubt that Palestinians are struggling against military occupation and have been doing so for 33 years. But there are four million refugees struggling against exile, in addition to the one million Palestinian citizens of Israel who have been living under a regime of racial and religious discrimination that has too long been hidden under labels like "Israeli democracy." One of the many problems with Oslo has been that Palestinian negotiators focused

exclusively on the occupation, to the neglect of the other two dimensions.

But it should finally be clear that in all three instances it is Zionism that we fight against, and until we have a leadership that can formulate an integrated strategy on all three fronts, we do not have leadership. The tragedy is that as the Intifada goes on, lives are tragically lost every day, in a political setting or framework that deepens the differences between Palestinians instead of bringing them closer together. We need a new vision, a new voice, a new truth.

Isn't it now clear that old slogans like "a Palestinian state" or "Jerusalem our capital" have brought us to this impasse? Shouldn't we expect a real leader to speak

to all Palestinians, honestly, fearlessly, without duplicity or winks at the US and Israel, and to chart a course forward that links together opposition to occupation, to exile, and to racial discrimination?

Why continue to delude people with the empty hope that "struggle," a word which seems to mean that others should do the dying, will get the Arab world generally and the Palestinians particularly what all have so long wanted? It is nothing short of alarming that after more than half a century of blustering, of expending blood and treasure, of militarization, of abrogating democracy and the most elementary requirements of citizenship in the Arab world, we find ourselves facing the same enemy, the same defeats, the same tactical shifts and hypocritical about-faces with the same tired arsenal of threats, promises, slogans and clichés—all of which have been proved more or less worthless and have produced the same failures from 1967 to Amman to October 1973 to Beirut to Oslo?

## Finding Common Ground

No one can deny that Palestine is an exception to nearly all the colonial issues of the past 200 years. It is exceptional, but not removed from history. Human history is full of similar instances. What has surprised me, as someone living at a distance from the Middle East but close to it in all sorts of ways, is how insulated from the rest of the world we keep ourselves,

*continued on page seven*



# The Tragedy Deepens

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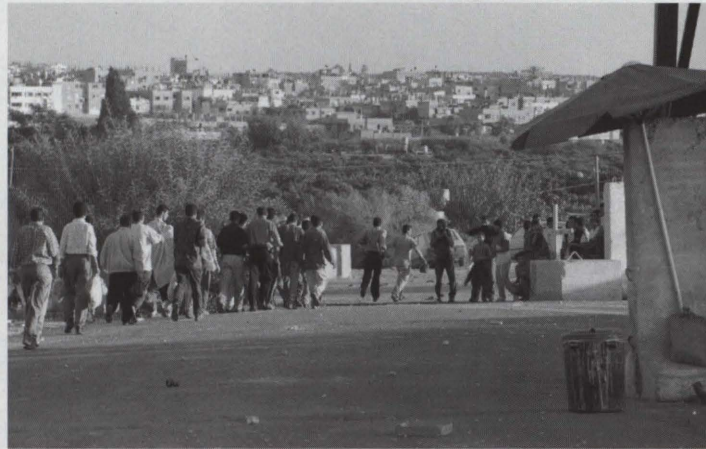
whereas, I believe, a great deal can be learned from the history of other oppressed peoples in the Americas, Africa, Asia and even Europe. Why do we resist comparing ourselves, say, with the South African blacks, or with the American Indians, or with the Vietnamese? By comparing I don't mean mechanically or slavishly, but rather creatively and imaginatively.

The late Eqbal Ahmad, who was certainly one of the two or three most brilliant analysts of contemporary history and politics that I ever knew, always drew attention to the fact that successful liberation movements were successful precisely because they employed creative ideas, original ideas, imaginative ideas where in other less successful movements (like ours, alas) there was a pronounced tendency to formulas and an uninspired repetition of past slogans and past patterns of behavior.

Take as a primary instance the idea of armed struggle. For decades we have relied in our minds on ideas about guns and killing, ideas that, from the 1930s until today, have brought us plentiful martyrs but have had little real effect not so much on Zionism but on our own ideas about what to do next. In our case, the fighting is done by a small brave number of people pitted against hopeless odds, i.e. stones against helicopter gunships, Merkava tanks, missiles. Yet a quick look at other movements—say the Indian nationalist movement, the South African liberation movement, the American civil rights movement—tell us first of all that only a mass movement employing tactics and strategy that maximize the popular element ever made any difference on the occupier and/or oppressor. Second, only a mass movement that has been politicized and imbued with a vision of participating directly in a future of its own making, only such a movement has historical chance of liberating itself from oppression or military occupation. The future, like the past, is built by human beings. They, and not some distant mediator or saviour, provide the agency for change.

It is clear to me, for example, that the immediate task in Palestine is to establish the goal of ridding ourselves of the occu-

pation, using imaginative means of struggle. That would necessarily involve large numbers of Palestinians intervening



**Palestinian workers cross the checkpoint at Eraz. Photo by Tsafirir Abayov, Impact Visuals**

directly in the settlement process, blocking roads, preventing building materials from entering, in other words, isolating the settlements instead of allowing them, containing a far smaller number of people, to isolate and surround Palestinians, which is what occurs today.

It is still true, for instance, that the labourers who built the Israeli settlements on a daily basis are in fact Palestinians: this should give some fairly simple idea of how deeply misled, misguided, under-mobilized and unpoliticized the Palestinian people are today. After 33 years of building Israeli settlements, Palestinian workers should immediately be provided by the Authority with alternative employment. Can't a few dollars be spared from the millions spent on useless security and unproductive bureaucracy? This is of course a failing of the leadership, but in the end it is also those individuals who know better—professionals, intellectuals, teachers, doctors and so on—who have the power of expression and the means to do so who have still not put enough pressure on the leadership to make it responsive to the situation.

And there at once is the greatest tragedy of all: a people is giving passionately of itself, losing the flower of its youth and all its energies in a valiant confrontation with an implacably cruel enemy who has no compunction about choking Palestinians to death, and still Mr Arafat is silent. He has not truly and honestly addressed his people since the crisis began, not even a 10-minute broadcast to give it strength,

to explain his policies, to tell the people where we are, how we got here, and where we are going. Is his heart made of stone, is his conscience completely anaesthetised?

I find this astoundingly incomprehensible, and this after 30 years of leading us from one catastrophe and ill-considered adventure to another, without respite and without even a whispered "thank you for bearing with me and my appalling, bumbling mistakes and miscalculations for so long!" I for one am fed up with his attitude of contempt for his people, and for his stony autocratic imperturbability, his inability either to listen or to take other people seriously, his unending ambigu-

ities, secrecy and blindingly irrational lurches from one patron to another, all the while leaving his long-suffering people to fend for themselves.

The Al-Aqsa Intifada is an Intifada against Oslo and against the people who constructed it, not only Dennis Ross and Barak, but a small, irresponsible coterie of Palestinian officials. These people should now have the decency to stand before their people, admit their mistakes, and ask (if they can get it) for popular support if there is a plan. If there isn't one (as I suspect) they should then have the elementary courtesy at least to say so. Only by doing this can there be anything more than tragedy at the end of the road. Palestinian officials signed the agreement to partition Hebron, they signed many other agreements without getting prior assurances that the settlements would end (and at least not be increased) and that all signs of military occupation would be effaced. They must now explain publicly what they thought they were doing and why they did it. Then they must let us express our views on their actions and their future. And for once they must listen and try to put the general interest before their own, despite the millions of dollars they have either squandered or squirreled away in Paris apartments and valuable real estate and lucrative business deals with Israel. Enough is enough.

*This article is reprinted from Al-Ahram Weekly, Cairo, Dec 7-13. Edward Said is a Palestinian activist and professor.*



# Israel—Land of Apartheid

TANYA REINHART

In today's setting, it is hard to recall that just a few years ago, only some fringe lunatics demanded Israeli control of 'Temple Mount.' Every time they tried to enter the place and pray, Israeli police would be there to block their entrance or drag them out. Even the word 'Temple Mount' was perceived as belonging to the bizarre vocabulary of religious fanatics.

Today it is the Israeli government that launches the holy war. Israel's foreign affairs minister—the ex-liberal Shlomo Ben-Ami—declares day and night that “no nation can give up its sacred sites” and the world nods and accepts.

[Former Israeli military leader Ariel] Sharon could not have entered the site without approval of Barak and the government. His visit had been carefully planned, with a thousand soldiers securing it and taking shooting positions on the roofs in advance. It is not Sharon who is responsible for the present massacre, but Barak, Ben Ami, the Israeli government, and Israel's “peacenicks” who have been supporting them all the way through.

Israel's claim on ‘Temple Mount’ is completely new—brought up only since the recent Camp David negotiations. In 1995's Beilin-AbuMaazen plan for the final agreement, which is the basis for the present ‘negotiations,’ it was still stated that the area will be in ‘extraterritorial Palestinian sovereignty’ (1). The more Arafat gives in, the more new demands are brought up by Israel.

The Beilin- AbuMazen document, itself, is a shameful document, which leaves all the settlements untouched, and acknowledges Israeli sovereignty over most of the central West Bank.

It was agreed that Arafat will renounce, on behalf of the Palestinians, any claim on Jerusalem, and the Palestinian institutions will move to the village Abu-Dis, bordering with Jerusalem. In return, Arafat will be allowed to call Abu-Dis the capital of the Palestinian state. The verbal trick was that Abu-Dis will be named Al-Quds, so it can be presented like the city is divided to the Jewish part ‘Jerusalem’ and the Palestinian part ‘Al Quds’.

Arafat has agreed to this long time ago.



An Israeli soldier directs traffic on a side road near the Kfar Darom Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip November 22, 2000. Photo by Tsafir Abayov, Impact Visuals

For Example, in *Haaretz* (May 5, 1998) it is reported that “Yaser Arafat accepts the idea that the capital of the Palestinian state will be Abu-Dis, neighboring Jerusalem, and sees the understandings included in Beilin-AbuMaazen agreement as a realistic option for the final agreement with Israel.”

“In a meeting with the Middle East section of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Arafat was asked if it is possible to reach an agreement with Israel also on the question of Jerusalem. Arafat: ‘Certainly, it is possible to accept the idea of Abu-Dis, which belonged to Al-Quds also under Jordanian rule.’”

Even that was not good enough for Barak. In the original Beilin- AbuMazen plan, only the land with the Jewish settlements of the central West Bank (labelled “Jerusalem”) was to be annexed. So they prepared a rather windy map that includes these settlements but includes no Palestinians. Israel's interest in doing it this way was to avoid the need of giving these Palestinians Israeli citizenship including social rights—health, etc, or political rights of voting.

Barak ‘straightened’ the maps. The annexation proposed in Camp David will include also the areas with Palestinian residents. But these residents will not be given Israeli citizenship, since “they will vote for the Palestinian state”. This additional little trick then enables annexing the land without giving any rights to the annexed Palestinian residents (2).

It appears that the Palestinian negotiators in Camp David have also agreed to

this proposal. Or at least we have never heard otherwise.

But then Barak came up with the new demand that the Palestinians will also renounce their hold in Al Aksa (Temple Mount). Even a collaborator like Arafat cannot accept such demands and survive.

No rational account could tie these facts together. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Barak

is in the end not really wanting a formal agreement with the Palestinians, not even the rather full surrender that Arafat was willing to accept.

Barak and Sharon see only one solution to the ‘Palestinian problem’—subjugation and control! It is not at all impossible that in their sick generals’ minds they believe that if one applies sufficient force for sufficient time it may be possible to drive more and more Palestinians out of Jerusalem and the central West Bank so this area becomes more Arab-free. And this approach isn't confined to just the occupied Palestinians. For several weeks now, Israeli Palestinians have been subject to vicious attacks, and more and more voices in the media (orchestrated, as always, from above) complain about how they have too many rights and are not “loyal” to Israel.

Israel has become the land of apartheid.

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(1) Newsweek 9-17-00; Ha'aretz 9-18-00.

(2) Nahum Barnea “Yediot Aharonot” 6-30-00: “The Arabs living in the settlement blocks which will be annexed to Israel will have the same rights as the Israelis living in Palestine: They will vote for the Palestinian state and will live by its laws.”



## Resource List for the Middle East Issues

Below is a partial list of groups that offer information and analyses on the Middle East, particularly related to Israel and Palestine.

### Alternative Information Center

[www.alternativenews.org](http://www.alternativenews.org)

AIC is a Palestinian-Israeli organization which disseminates information, research and political analysis on Palestinian and Israeli societies and conflicts while promoting cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis based on the values of social justice, solidarity and community involvement.

### Bat Shalom

[www.batshalom.org](http://www.batshalom.org)

A feminist peace organization of Israeli women that works with the Palestinian peace organization Jerusalem Center for Women to comprise the Jerusalem Link. The Jerusalem Link works towards a "real peace" not merely a treaty of mutual deterrence, but a culture of peace and cooperation between peoples.

### Beit Shalom

114 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1001  
New York, NY 10001

A new coalition of 15 American Jewish support groups for the Israeli peace movement.

### Boston Committee on the Middle East (BCOME)

[www.salam.org](http://www.salam.org)

Publishes *Salam Review*, a monthly magazine about the struggle for peace and justice in the Middle East

### Gush Shalom

PO Box 322, Tel Aviv 61033, Israel  
[www.gush-shalom.org](http://www.gush-shalom.org)

Founded in 1992, in the aftermath of the deportation of 415 Palestinians by Rabin's government, Gush Shalom is a Jewish group committed to the rights and sovereignty of Palestinians in Jerusalem. They march alone, with the PLO and with other organizations at demonstrations.

### The Israeli-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI)

[www.ipcri.org](http://www.ipcri.org)

Founded in 1989, IPCRI is a Palestinian-Israeli public-policy think tank devoted to developing practical solutions for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### The Jewish Peace Lobby

8604 Second Avenue, Suite 317  
Silver Spring, MD 20910; 301 589 8764  
A national Jewish organization supporting a two-state solution including a shared Jerusalem, as the best way to achieve peace, security and justice

### Middle East Report (MERIP)

1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW Suite 119  
Washington, DC 20005; [www.merip.org](http://www.merip.org)  
Middle East Report (MERIP) provides news and perspectives about the Middle East not available from mainstream news sources. The magazine has a reputation for independent analysis of events and developments in the Middle East.

### The Other Israel

[http://members.tripod.com/~other\\_Israel/](http://members.tripod.com/~other_Israel/)  
Bi-monthly publication that provides coverage of the diverse struggles waged by the Israeli peace movement at large. It reports on a variety of activities which remain largely unreported in the world media.

### Palestine Report Online

<http://mail.jmcc.org/media/reportonline/report.html>

A project of the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center in Jerusalem. It is a continuation of the print Palestine report, which was established nearly 10 years ago as a means of informing English-speakers about Palestinians and their daily lives in the context of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### Peace Now

[www.peace-now.org](http://www.peace-now.org)

Founded by veteran Israeli reservist officers who wrote then premier Menachem Begin on the eve of Camp David, imploring him to be flexible with the Egyptians.

### Z-Net Middle East Watch

<http://www.lbbs.org/meastwatch/meastwat.htm>

ZNet's Watch Areas are each subsites unto themselves that provide essays, reports, and links on the relevant topic often prepared by volunteers for ZNet.

*continued from page three*

including very recent years. The US and Israel are, of course, not alone in adopting this doctrine, and it is sometimes even condemned: namely, when adopted by enemies targeted for destruction. A recent example is the response of Serbia when its territory (as the US insists it is) was attacked by Albanian-based guerrillas, killing Serb police and civilians and abducting civilians (including Albanians) with the openly-announced intent of eliciting a "disproportionate response" that would arouse Western indignation, then NATO military attack. Very rich documentation from US, NATO, and other Western sources is now available, most of it produced in an effort to justify the bombing. Assuming these sources to be credible, we find that the Serbian response—while doubtless "disproportionate" and criminal, as alleged—does not compare with the standard resort to the same doctrine by the US and its clients, Israel included.

In the mainstream British press, we can at last read that "If Palestinians were black, Israel would now be a pariah state subject to economic sanctions led by the United States [which is not accurate, unfortunately]. Its development and settlement of the West Bank would be seen as a system of apartheid, in which the indigenous population was allowed to live in a tiny fraction of its own country, in self-administered 'bantustans', with 'whites' monopolising the supply of water and electricity. And just as the black population was allowed into South Africa's white areas in disgracefully under-resourced townships, so Israel's treatment of Israeli Arabs - flagrantly discriminating against them in housing and education spending - would be recognised as scandalous too" (*Observer, Guardian*, October 15, 2000).

Such conclusions will come as no surprise to those whose vision has not been constrained by the doctrinal blinders imposed for many years. It remains a major task to remove them in the most important country. That is a prerequisite to any constructive reaction to the mounting chaos and destruction, terrible enough before our eyes, and with long-term implications that are not pleasant to contemplate.

*Noam Chomsky is a professor of linguistics at MIT and a Resist founder and member of the Board of Advisors.*



# GRANTS

*RESIST awards grants six times a year to groups throughout the United States engaged in activism for social and economic justice. In this issue of the Newsletter we list a few grant recipients from our December 2000 allocation cycle. For more information, contact the groups at the addresses below.*

## Burma Project

2017 Mission Street Ste #303  
San Francisco, CA 94110

The Burma Project was founded in the fall of 2000 in protest of the violation of the Burmese human rights at the hands of a brutal military regime. The project's mission is to support the Burmese democracy by coordinating corporate campaigns to reduce financial support for Burma's military regime, and creating political pressure on the regime to force them toward democracy.

Resist awarded the Burma Project \$2,000 for the UNOCAL corporate accountability campaign, which seeks to pressure UNOCAL, a US-based oil corporation, to withdraw its operations and investments from Burma. The grant will help pay for campaign materials, office expenses and the organizer's salary.

## DRUM

### Desi Rising Up and Moving

c/o Brecht Forum  
122 West 27th St 10th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
[www.drumnation.org](http://www.drumnation.org)

DRUM's mission is to build a social justice movement amongst people of the South Asian diaspora. Desi is a term used to designate people of South Asian descent. The organization's Community Justice Education Project brings high school and university students together to learn social justice organizing skills, and to provide the South Asian community in Jackson Heights, Queens with access to progressive organizations.

Resist's \$2,000 grant for general support will help DRUM organize an internship program between Desi high school and university students, work with INS detainees, and a community-organizing project.

This grant was awarded from the Leslie D' Cora Holmes Memorial Fund, which supports activities and organizations that embody the characteristics, values, and principles that reflect the spirit-filled mission of Leslie D'Corra Holmes, including: empowerment for

communities and individuals; self-determination through education and community organizing; harmonization of diverse communities of interest; actualization and recognition of individual potential; courage of conviction; and pride in culture, community and self.

## The Newtown Florist Club

PO Box 908403  
Gainesville, GA 30501  
[newtown193@aol.com](mailto:newtown193@aol.com)

The Newtown Florist Club (NFC) was founded 50 years ago by a local group of African-American women who provided support to bereaved families, and has developed into a community-based organization geared toward promoting youth development, social, economic and environmental justice in Gainesville, Georgia. NFC works with the community to expose environmental racism and to foster the development of community residents into social justice leaders.

Resist's \$2,000 grant will fund the purchase of a video camera to be used by the Youth Activist Summer Leadership Development Program to document industrial spills and their effect on the local community.

## Join the Resist Pledge Program

**We'd like you to consider becoming a Resist Pledge.**

**Pledges account for over 30% of our income.**

By becoming a pledge, you help guarantee Resist a fixed and dependable source of income on which we can build our grant-making program. In return, we will send you a monthly pledge letter and reminder along with your newsletter. We will keep you up-to-date on the groups we have funded and the other work being done at Resist.

So take the plunge and become a Resist Pledge! We count on you, and the groups we fund count on us.

**Yes! I'll become a RESIST Pledge.**

I'll send you my pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
every month/two months/  
quarter/six months (circle one).

☐ Enclosed is an initial pledge contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ I can't join the pledge program now, but here's a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support your work.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Donations to Resist are tax-deductible.

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## Organizer's Collaborative

PO Box 400897  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
[org-c@organizenow.net](mailto:org-c@organizenow.net)

The Organizer's Collaborative was established to develop ways for progressive and social change organizations to use computers and the Internet. The Collaborative's goal is to strengthen communication between social change activists and to develop online resources, which facilitate collaboration and movement-building among the progressive community.

Resist's grant of \$2,000 will assist the Organizer's Collaborative in their efforts to develop an online social change database of over 1,000 creative social change tactics and an online directory of social change groups in their area.